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C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 001908

SIPDIS

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE, NSC FOR ABRAMS/RAMCHAND/PASCUAL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/17/2018
TAGS: [KWBG](#) [PHUM](#) [ASEC](#) [IS](#) [PBTS](#) [PTER](#)
SUBJECT: UPTICK IN SETTLER VIOLENCE

REF: A) JERUSALEM 1495 B) JERUSALEM 1739

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles, per reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (SBU) Summary. New reports of settler violence are consistent with the trend of increased settler militancy in recent months (reftels). These incidents have been centered in the Nablus area, but contacts report violence throughout most of the West Bank. End summary.

Uptick in Settler Attacks

12. (C) Rabbis for Human Rights Director Arik Ascherman detailed recent settler attacks against Palestinians for PolOff October 17. He said an increased Israeli security presence has been positive and allowed many Palestinians to harvest their olive trees, but there have been more attacks recently than the IDF can respond to. Ascherman described an October 16 incident in which approximately 30 settlers entered the Palestinian village of Kafr Qadum (west of Nablus, next to Kedumim settlement), burned around 40 olive trees, and stole picked olives before the IDF could respond.

13. (C) Ascherman described another incident at Gilad Farm on October 17, when a settler attacked a Palestinian "with an iron bar," but no one was injured. Near Elon Moriah settlement east of Nablus on October 16, he said, settlers smashed the windows and slashed the tires of a Palestinian vehicle while the owner was harvesting nearby olive trees. He said that, in this case, "the army was there, but did not do anything." Ascherman also reported that settlers from Yitzhar, south of Nablus, threw stones at Palestinians from Burin, who "got too close to the settlement," but no injuries were reported.

Palestinian Mayor Complains of Settlers Near Bayt Sahur

14. (C) Bayt Sahur Mayor Hani al-Hayak told Poloffs that, on October 16, dozens of settlers gathered in Ush al-Gharab (an evacuated IDF base near Bayt Sahur) to chase off Palestinian families who frequently picnic in the area. Al-Hayak said the settlers entered the area under IDF protection. Palestinian contacts told PolOffs that the IDF established a flying checkpoint several hours later and arrested several international peace activists.

WALLES